

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

PURPOSE

This is a Request for Information (“**RFI**”) issued by the Indiana Department of Education (“**IDOE**”). On January 19, 2010, IDOE submitted to the United States Department of Education (“**ED**”) an application for the award of a grant under the federal Race to the Top (“**RttT**”) program. Indiana’s plan for implementation of the RttT initiatives, or Indiana’s *Fast Forward* plan, is available at www.doe.in.gov/fastforward.

This RFI seeks responses for the administration of the *Fast Forward* Support and Accountability Office (“**Office**”). The Office will be responsible for managing the time-sensitive, yet relatively short-term, responsibilities associated with implementing a grant program of the scale of RttT. The key objective of this RFI is to provide respondents with information concerning the IDOE’s need to identify a partner or partners that demonstrate(s) (1) strong capacity to deliver and maintain high-caliber human capital to resource the Office; (2) experience in managing or providing strategic advice to large-scale and complex organizations; (3) capability to use and help others access sophisticated technologies; and (4) performance results against aggressive targets, regardless of industry or project.

There will not be a contract resulting directly from this RFI, but respondents to this RFI will be placed on the list of potential respondents and will receive an announcement of any Request for Proposal (“**RFP**”) that may arise from this RFI.

IDOE reserves the right to request clarifications on proposals submitted to the state. IDOE also reserves the right to conduct proposal discussions, either oral or written, with respondents. These discussions could include request for additional information, request for cost or technical proposal revision, etc. Additionally, in conducting discussions, the state may use information derived from proposals submitted by competing respondents only if the identity of the respondent providing the information is not disclosed to others. The state will provide equivalent information to all respondents which have been chosen for discussions. Discussions, along with negotiations with responsible respondents, may be conducted for any appropriate purpose.

BACKGROUND

IDOE is especially interested in selecting a preeminent program management partner to administer the Office through the life of the four-year grant. Rather than growing government for the purposes of RttT only to contract it again at its conclusion, IDOE will task the Office with those grant-specific responsibilities for which IDOE does not need to immediately gain expertise, including the following:

- (1) Program management – providing all general program oversight relative to implementing the *Fast Forward* plan;
- (2) Grant support – assisting participating local education agencies (“**LEAs**”) in

- implementing *Fast Forward* by maintaining regular contact with participating LEAs to answer grant-related inquiries and provide guidance;
- (3) Reporting – aggregating all required reports and transmitting same to IDOE for review, modification and submission to ED;
 - (4) Evaluation – engaging an independent entity or entities to evaluate which initiatives are having the expected impact and which require modification;
 - (5) Best practices clearinghouse – warehousing and communicating best practices from around Indiana and, as the information is available, throughout the country; and
 - (6) Funds realignment – recommending to IDOE a realignment of funds away from those programs that are not achieving results or from those participating LEAs that are not implementing *Fast Forward* with fidelity.

SOLICITATION OF PROPOSALS

Before accepting proposals for review in accordance with the usual procurement procedures for the State, IDOE is soliciting feedback from potential respondents to an RFP regarding the information presented in this RFI.

OBJECTIVE

IDOE is seeking feedback on the information in this RFI. IDOE will consider any information received in response to this RFI in the construction of an RFP soliciting these services.

SPECIFIC NEEDS

The RFP process will be open to all respondents regardless of their decision to participate in this RFI. IDOE seeks creative, high-level responses to the RFI components. IDOE is especially interested in receiving the following information from each respondent:

- Respondent's qualifications and related experience necessary to provide and maintain the high-caliber human capital required for the Support and Accountability Office.
- References demonstrating respondent's experience in managing or providing strategic advice to large-scale and complex organizations.
- Evidence of respondent's capability to use and help others access sophisticated technologies.
- Evidence demonstrating respondent has produced results against aggressive targets.
- Evidence demonstrating respondent's expertise in program management, grant support, reporting, evaluation, best practices, and funds realignment, as each is contemplated in Indiana's *Fast Forward* plan.
- Cost associated with staffing and carrying out the activities of the Office, as described in Indiana's *Fast Forward* plan.
- Information about any incentives or additional pricing structures that would be beneficial to the State.

RESPONSES

Respondents shall submit **one** original soft copy (CD-ROM) and **four** hard copies of the written response to

Heather Neal
Indiana Department of Education
151 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Responses must be received no later than **3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, March 12, 2010.** The outside of the package (envelope or box) should be clearly marked as follows:

“RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE”

Any questions regarding this RFI shall be submitted via email to hneal@doe.in.gov no later than **3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 26, 2010.** Responses to all questions will be promptly prepared, and a copy of each question and answer will be posted to the *Fast Forward* page of the IDOE website: www.doe.in.gov/fastforward.

Inquiries are not to be directed to any staff member of IDOE; inquiries may only be directed to the listed email address.

Responses will be considered public information once an RFP is complete. If an RFP is not undertaken, the responses are considered public once the decision is made.

Please note that the single point of contact for this RFI is Heather Neal at hneal@doe.in.gov.

Please note that the usual and customary procedures for selecting a vendor (issuance of an RFP) may follow this RFI. The process will be open to all providers irrespective of their participation or non-involvement in this information-gathering process.